



# War Guilt Problems in Japan

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Compared with German experiences of coming to terms with their Nazi past (Vergangenheitsbewältigung), war guilt problems in Japan are usually critically disputed, and often condemned for the lack of effort to reconcile with East Asian countries which the Japanese army had invaded some sixty years ago. The endless disputes about the Tokyo Trial, history textbooks, 'comfort women', the Nanjing Massacre, and Yasukuni Shrine visits reveal that the Japanese understand war guilt problems rather differently from the rest of the world.

The peculiar usage of the words 'war guilt' account for some of these differences. By saying 'war guilt', most Japanese think about the responsibility for starting the war with China, America, Great Britain, and other allied nations. As a matter of fact, we usually say '*sensou sekinin*' (war responsibility) rather than '*sensou hanzai*' (war guilt). While 'guilt' sounds

something like a criminal offense against morals or the penal law, 'responsibility' does not necessarily mean something criminal or offensive but only politically wrong and terrible. What is lacking in the minds of ordinary Japanese people when saying 'war responsibility' is the notion of sin<sup>(1)</sup>.

In this paper the author shows what brought about these differences, and how it wielded the influence the dispute over war guilt problems.

### 1. The Tokyo Trial

At the end of World War II the American President Truman, the British Prime Minister Atlee, and the Soviet General Secretary Stalin met in Potsdam, the only available place to meet near war devastated Berlin, and announced the conditions of surrender to the Japanese Government and her Army. In the 10th clause of the Potsdam Proclamation of July 1945, the Allies said, "we do not intend that the Japanese shall be enslaved as a race or destroyed as a nation, but stern justice shall be meted out to all war criminals, including those who had visited cruelties upon our prisoners"<sup>(2)</sup>. This became a legal basis for the Allies to establish the International Tribunal for the Far East (Tokyo Trial). But the problem was what was meant by the "war criminals, including those who had visited cruelties upon our prisoners".

On 19 January 1946 the General Headquarters Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (GHQ/SCAP), General MacArthur, announced the Charter of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (Tokyo Charter). The Tokyo Charter was almost the same as the Charter of the International Military Tribunal (Nuremberg Charter), which had been concluded on 8 August 1945 by the four major allied countries (America, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and France) in London. The most important difference

between the two Charters was the role of GHQ/SCAP, General MacArthur; according to the Tokyo Charter, it was GHQ/SCAP who should appoint eleven judges from eleven allied countries, the judge chief of those eleven, and the chief prosecutor, whereas the Nuremberg Charter prescribed that it was each of the four major allied countries who should appoint its own judge and chief prosecutor<sup>(3)</sup>. Therefore, the Tokyo Trial was under the great influence of GHQ/SCAP and the American Government.

On 28 April, 1946, the birthday of Emperor Hirohito, the indictments were announced. 28 defendants were accused of 55 charges; charges 1-36 were classified as crimes against peace, charges 37-52 as murder and conspiracy, and charges 53-55 as ordinary war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Tokyo Trial began and lasted almost two and a half years until it ruled in November 1948. According to the judgment, for charges 37-52 under murder and conspiracy none were sufficiently proven, and for charges 53-55 under ordinary war crimes and crimes against humanity no defendants were proven guilty of crimes against humanity, so that the charges which were proven guilty were only crimes against peace and ordinary war crimes<sup>(4)</sup>. Considering the fact that the German war criminals in Nuremberg were mainly charged with crimes against humanity, it was characteristic that the judges in Tokyo did not recognize the Japanese war criminals to be guilty of crimes against humanity at all.

Immediately after the Tokyo Trial most Japanese thought that the accused war criminals were punished because of their war time initiative and leadership, and not necessarily of their inhuman criminal acts on battlefields. Prime Minister Hideki Tojo, Foreign Minister Shigenori Togo, Army General Seishiro Itagaki and other civil and military leaders were punished for the fact that they planned, scheduled, and carried out the war, or did not make

effort to stop the planned war from being carried out. Crimes against peace were their main criminal acts<sup>(5)</sup>. The abominable words in Japanese which mean the person in charge is an '*Eikyu senpan*' ('A 'class war criminals'), which showed that the Japanese people, consciously or unconsciously, severely condemned those persons who committed crimes against peace<sup>(6)</sup>. In his profound study of the establishment of the International Military Tribunal (IMT), Yasuaki Ohnuma concluded that the greatest significance of the IMT was that it built up the foundation of two international legal principles; the illegality of war and the responsibility of leaders<sup>(7)</sup>.

Critics against the Tokyo Trial began almost from the very beginning of the trial. In the opening statement for the accused side Ichiro Kiyose, Japanese barrister to Tojo, representing all the defense counsel, argued that the Tokyo Trial did not have the authority to try those who had committed crimes against peace and crimes against humanity, because the Trial did not have jurisdiction over those who had not committed war crimes regulated in the Potsdam Proclamation<sup>(8)</sup>. According to Kiyose and other barristers to the Japanese war criminals, war was not illegal and therefore killing in war did not mean murder, and the Japanese Government could not suppose that the most prominent politicians and generals should be prosecuted for their wartime leadership, considering the fact that the Potsdam Proclamation had mentioned only the "war criminals, including those who had visited cruelties upon our prisoners" without saying anything about the arch criminals, such as Tojo, Togo, or Itagaki.

Kiyose's argument constituted the basic critics which other lawyers, law scholars, journalists, politicians, writers, and even anonymous letter writers to the editors from all the conservative blocs<sup>(9)</sup>.

## 2. School Textbooks

In Japan all school textbooks must be authorized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. According to the Ministry, the authorization process is required to examine the validity of textbooks from the academic standpoint. Also, the Ministry insisted that they only look through textbooks to find simple errors or inevitable misprints, and that the authorization does not mean censorship. As for history textbooks, however, the border between authorization and censorship is very ambiguous.

In June 1982, Japanese newspapers reported the results of this year's authorization and said that some texts on the World War II were required to be rewritten; for example, "Japanese invasion of China" was changed to "Japanese occupation of Manchuria" (*Sekaishi (World History)*, Tokyo Shoseki), "the Meiji government repeated wars and invasions..." to "the Meiji government continued an expansion policy" (*Sekai no rekishi (History of the World)*, Yamakawa Shuppansha), and so on. Immediately after these press reports, the Chinese and Korean governments condemned the Japanese government saying that Japan would not acknowledge the responsibility of her invasion of Asian nations which resulted in the outbreak of the Pacific War.

Accepting the Chinese and Korean critics, the Japanese government decided to change her textbook policy. The Chief Cabinet Secretary, Kiichi Miyazawa, made an official announcement which promised to acknowledge these critics and revise the policy from the standpoint of friendly relationships with Asian countries. This was really the starting point of the following incidents of the textbook issues. Following the Miyazawa line, the Ministry of Education gradually relaxed its rein on textbook policy. Textbooks became more flexible and open, so authors could write about

negative aspects of the war, such as the invasion of China, the Nanjing Massacre, 'comfort women' from Korea and other Asian countries, and so on.

Confronted with these situation, conservative scholars, writers, and financial circles united once again. In 1996 the *Atarashii rekishi kyokasho wo tsukuru kai* (Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform) was set up<sup>(10)</sup>. One of the founders, Kanji Nishio, a renown Nietzsche scholar, insisted on new methods in historical education which would make students proud of their own country. Nishio said that there was no time to lose in uniting the historical view of the Japanese people so as not to be taken advantage of by neighboring countries, and they were now beginning a new era to open the door for the silent voices of suppressed history<sup>(11)</sup>. Another founder, Nobukatsu Fujioka, a pedagogist, criticized the current history education as masochistic. Fujioka said that masochistic historical views spread rapidly in the educational and journalism world. According to him, masochistic historical views depict the history of own country as atrocious and brutal, continuous deeds of devil<sup>(12)</sup>. From this standpoint he pointed out some negative descriptions in the current history textbooks, such as descriptions of 'comfort women', as stereotypical bad images of Japan depicted in French painter Georges Bigot's caricature of the Meiji state, and negative evaluation of the Meiji Restoration in comparison with Abraham Lincoln's famous slogan 'of the people, by the people, for the people'<sup>(13)</sup>. Whether his worry about the situation that through studying such history Japanese junior high school students get the image of a dirty, cunning, narrow-minded, foul, and terrible Japan, hit the mark is not always easy to answer. Clearer is that Fujioka, criticizing the one-sided stereotypical image of Japanese history in textbooks too much, replaced it with another stereotypical image of his own ideal history of Japan.

When their textbook, *Atarashii rekishi (New History)* was completed and authorized as a school textbook by the Ministry of Education, there again occurred a great wave of criticism from Asian countries. But this time the Japanese government would not accept those critics, saying that the Ministry of Education could not intervene in any specific historical view.

Considering that the Ministry had actually been intervening in the historical view of textbook authors for decades, their explanation did not seem very persuasive. And, it was natural that China and Korea were not satisfied with that explanation.

### 3. 'Comfort Women'

In December 1991 a Korean group, *Taiheiyo sensou giseisha izoku kai* (the Society for the Bereaved Victims of the Pacific War) sued the Japanese government for loss and the damages caused by the war. What was a shock to the Japanese people was that there were so-called '*Juhgun Ianfu*' ('wartime comfort women') among the Korean plaintiffs. They insisted that many Korean young girls had been kidnapped or deceived and taken to the battlefield and had been used as forced slave labor as "comfort women" for Japanese soldiers. After an initial hesitation, the Japanese government, urged by a Japanese historian, Yoshiaki Yoshimi, who found documents in the Military Archives of the Defense Ministry which showed the involvement of the Japanese Army in activities, finally recognized the responsibility of the Japanese government and her Army in this matter<sup>(14)</sup>.

Apart from the suit, the Japanese government planned to make compensation to the "comfort women", and set up a foundation, *Josei no tame no Asia heiwa kokumin kikin* (Asian Women's Fund). However, the Fund was expected to gather the money not from the national treasury, but

from the Japanese people. As the official position in these matters was that the Japanese government had been always insisting that the reparation and restitution problems after the war were regulated in the San Francisco Peace Treaty, the Reparations Treaties with relevant Asian countries, and other bilateral treaties including the Japan-Korea Basic Treaty in 1965, the Japan-China Joint Statement in 1972, and therefore all aspects of reparation or restitution had been already resolved, and the Japanese government had no legal responsibility of payment to individual victims even though Japan must feel moral responsibility. Without any legal and legislative support, the Murayama 'socialist' government established a quasi-official foundation to implement the atonement project<sup>(15)</sup>.

However, some women associations and victim support groups had long demanded that the Japanese government, not a civil foundation, should pay compensation. According to the groups, the Asian Women's Fund was a front to escape the responsibility of the Japanese government for compensating the victims of the war. In Korea most people to whom the Fund offered payment refused to accept the money. Furthermore, those who were ready to accept the money from the Fund were severely reproached for their traitorous behavior. The activities of the Asian Women's Fund ended in deadlock in April 2007<sup>(16)</sup>.

#### 4. Slips of the Tongue

One of the reasons why war guilt problems have been brought up again and again between Japan and her neighboring countries is the fact that Japanese conservative politicians and ministers too often made slips of the tongue.

In October 1986 Masayuki Fujio, then the Minister of Education, argued



in a monthly magazine "*Bungei Shunjuu*" that the responsibility for the annexation of the Korean peninsula in 1910 also lay in Korea. Fujio's argument naturally aroused anger and suspicion among the Korean people. Under pressure from the Korean government, the Prime Minister, Yasuhiro Nakasone, himself one of the most confident conservatives, had to dismiss him from the cabinet.

On 22 April 1988, Seisuke Okuno, then the Director of the Agency of Land, said in a press conference that Asian countries were colonized by white men, but that only Japan was reproached. He had to resign as Director.

On 5 May 1994, Shigeto Nagano, then the Minister of Justice, said in an interview with a *Mainichi* newspaper reporter that he thought that the Nanjing Massacre was a frame-up. Also he said that 'comfort women' were only licensed prostitutes and had nothing to do with looking down on women or discrimination against Korean people. Under heavy criticism he also had to resign from the Ministry.

On 3 June 1995, Michio Watanabe, then the Foreign Minister, made a speech in a party conference saying that the Japan Korea Annexation Treaty in 1910 was an international treaty concluded between two countries harmoniously. He had to make apologies.

On 9 August 1995, Yoshinobu Shimamura, then the Minister of Education, said in his first press conference as the minister that whether one calls Japanese expansion invasion or not depends on his way of thinking. He had to withdraw his remarks.

It is curious to know why Japanese politicians who had reached such high posts as ministers or directors made such historically improper and politically incorrect remarks time and again. One simple answer is that they did so simply because they thought so. But we must also take into account

that not only their own thinking, but also the thinking of the people who support politicians in every election led politicians to speak in such a manner.

To explain this situation, Yutaka Yoshida's double-standard theory might be useful<sup>(17)</sup>. According to Yoshida, Japan employed a double-standard when thinking of war guilt problems: externally Japan admits war responsibility in the form of accepting the Tokyo Trial in the 11th clause of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, internally however Japan never admits her own responsibility, relying on the assumption that the United States and other western countries treat her as an ally against the eastern bloc, and not as an ex-enemy nation. In this double-standard, however, Japan is not allowed to express her own thinking of non-responsibility; formally (internationally) Japan is responsible for the war, informally (domestically) people may think that Japan is not, or at least not only Japan is, responsible for the war. This sort of external and internal contradiction frustrates the Japanese people, and has made some politicians, whose political thoughts were usually rejected in formal situations, burst out expressing their own feeling about war guilt problems.

One of the main themes of Japanese war guilt problems was the dispute about the Nanjing Massacre. In December 1937, after occupying Nanjing, Japanese troops were said to kill, assault, and rape great many innocent civilians including women and children. While in China the number of the victims was calculated at about 300,000, in Japan there were many estimates from 200,000 to 40,000<sup>(18)</sup>. The accuracy of the number of the victims does not necessarily matter, even though it is natural that we should continue our efforts to understand that abominable incident from every possible aspect including the number of the victims. However, what matters here is that the

Nanjing Massacre became the symbol of Japanese war guilt, and that to accept the facts of killing and raping innocent people by Japanese soldiers in Nanjing means that the Japanese sincerely accept the condemnation that the Japanese not only started the war but also committed a vast number of war crimes on the battlefields at the same time.

## 5. Yasukuni Shrine

Yasukuni Shrine is a Shinto shrine in Tokyo, where the spirits of Japanese war dead are enshrined. The shrine was founded in the beginning of Meiji era and continues as the only sacred place for bereaved families where they might meet the spirits of their beloved husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers. Banned as a national shrine by GHQ after World War II, Yasukuni Shrine became a private religious corporation without changing its character in worshipping the war dead as '*kami*' (gods).

It was a long-cherished hope of the postwar governments of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to revive the national shrine, or at least, official visits of the Emperor to Yasukuni Shrine. The opposition parties are strongly against this, saying that the recognition of a national shrine or the Emperor's visit to Yasukuni Shrine are violations of the separation of religion and politics provided in the Constitution, whereas the LDP justified their policy explaining that a visit to Shinto shrine is not religious conduct, but is an aspect of Japanese customs<sup>(19)</sup>.

On 15 August (the day of Japanese surrender) 1985 the Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone visited Yasukuni Shrine, which was the first (and the last) official visit of a prime minister after the war. Notwithstanding his firm conviction, however, Nakasone could not officially visit the shrine again under severe protests from the Chinese and Korean governments. After

Nakasone no prime ministers until Koizumi would risk his political life on the matter.

Jun-ichiro Koizumi was a unique LDP politician. He had relatively small backing in the party to become the LDP President. Furthermore being a liberal conservative, he did not necessarily ideologically support Yasukuni Shrine. Nevertheless, Koizumi visited the shrine in the first year of his premiership in 2001, and then once a year until the last year of his premiership. This naturally aroused intense opposition and severe criticism from neighbor countries. One difference with former prime ministers was that Koizumi would never stop visiting even when confronted with so many straightforward protests from Chinese and Korean top leaders. Koizumi's unprecedented insistence on visiting the shrine could not be explained without taking into consideration of his talented handling of public feelings inside and outside the LDP. He could count on the ideological support from the conservative right wing inside party, and from the anti-Chinese, anti-Korean feelings of the public outside the LDP, which was deteriorating even worse owing to the North-Korean abduction issue and to the anti-Japanese booings of Chinese supporters in the 2004 Asian Cup soccer meet.

One more difficult problem surrounding Yasukuni Shrine was that it enshrined not only the war dead but also the dead World War II war criminals including 'A' class war criminals who were executed or died of disease while imprisoned. The criticism from China and Korea focused on the enshrinement of 'A' class war criminals. Two solutions were envisaged. One was to remove the 'A' class war criminals from enshrinement at Yasukuni, the other was to create a new memorial institution for mourning the war dead other than Yasukuni Shrine. The former, however, was severely rejected by Yasukuni Shrine, for the reason that the spirits of the war dead

were enshrined collectively and could not be removed fragmentarily afterward. The other solution to create a new institution is underway, although there are strongly opposing opinions within the LDP that can not be easily settled.

In July 2006 a memorandum of the late Emperor Hirohito's statements written by Asahiko Tomita, the former Director General of the Imperial Household Agency was found. According to the memo, the Showa Emperor complained of the enshrinement of 'A' class war criminals by the chief priest of Yasukuni Shrine, and that thereafter he would not visit the shrine. Although it could not safely be said how accurate the memo revealed the thought of the Emperor, it must have subtle influence upon the Japanese people. Thanks to the Emperor's 'will', either of the two solutions above mentioned might be possible in the future.

## **6. Japanese Victims**

In war guilt problems the Japanese people are always offenders. Victims are always the people of China, Korea, and South East Asian countries. There are, however, Japanese victims who criticized the war policy of the Japanese government and demanded compensation of their wartime damages.

On 9 March 2007 the victims and the bereaved families of casualties of the Tokyo firebombing sued the Japanese government for the damages from the air attack led by the US Army Air Force on 10 March 1945. The Tokyo firebombing, in which about 100,000 people were killed, was the beginning of the subsequent city bombings by the US B (oeing) 29 bombers, ending with the Atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki<sup>(20)</sup>. After the war the Japanese government did not give relief to the victims and the bereaved families of casualties of these bombings, although vast amounts of military

pensions were paid to the bereaved families of battlefield war dead.

According to the petition, the plaintiffs demanded compensation for damages caused by the US fire bombings which were the result of the Japanese government's decision to initiate a reckless war and subsequently miss opportunities to end the war at the beginning of 1945 due to their insistence on one more military victory, thus allowing the enemy more time to attack defenseless cities.

Another group of the victims who demanded relief from the Japanese government was the atomic bomb victims. Although the casualties of the atomic bombings were above 200,000, talking about anything relating to the atomic bombs was prohibited by GHQ during the occupation period. In 1954 there occurred an incident in which a Japanese fishing boat was exposed to radiation from an American H-bomb test at Bikini Atoll and the Japanese skipper died. The incident shocked Japanese people and an antinuclear movement arose all over Japan which aimed at the abolition of all the nuclear weapons and relief for the victims of the atomic bombs by the government.

In this situation *Nihon hidankyo* (the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organization) was established in 1956. Since then the *Hidankyo* demanded relief for A-bomb sufferers (*hibakusha*) for about forty years, until finally seeing the Atomic Bomb Survivor's Aid Law enacted in 1994 by the Murayama Cabinet. According to the Aid Law, the *hibakusha* will be given medical treatment, a medical allowance, and special condolence money. The *Hidankyo*, however, criticized the Aid Law for not providing state compensation and survivor pensions for the damage caused by the atomic bombs. Also they are not satisfied with the government's policy to decide who should be an A-bomb illness victim. According to the Ministry

of Health, Labor and Welfare, those who were recognized as A-bomb illness victims were only 0.87 per cent of all *hibakusha*. This comes from a severe standard of recognition of A-bomb illness victims whom the Ministry should provide all the medical expenses for<sup>(21)</sup>. In 2003 many *hibakusha* brought suits against the government for recognition as A-bomb illness victims. With all these problems, however, the Aid Law was a major landmark for the victims of the war other than battlefield war dead, meaning that they could be compensated at least partly, thus, as the *Hidankyo* expected, the Aid Law could open the way to compensation for war damage inflicted not only on the A-bomb victims but also on the general public.

## 7. Three Aspects in the War Guilt Discussions in Japan

Three aspects which characterize the discussion around war guilt problems in Japan can be pointed out; public officials or ordinary people, Japanese or foreigners, and war responsibility or war crimes.

### (1) Public officials or ordinary people

Most Japanese people feel sympathy for the victims of the war, who died or were injured on the battlefield, lost their homes in the firebombings, and suffered from anxiety, loss of families, diseases, and injuries in the war. To compensate them or not, however, depends on the victims' position. If they were soldiers and were killed or injured in battle, they or their bereaved families would be fully compensated for life. But if they were civilians and were killed or injured in bombings inland or by enemy attacks in Japanese occupied areas (e.g. in Manchuria, China, Korea...), they did not get any compensation at all. As mentioned above, even A-bomb victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki did not obtain compensation.

The background philosophy of this discrimination lies in the traditional thought of putting public officials over the ordinary people. The soldiers who worked and died for the country must be compensated, because nobody would be prepared to die for the country without knowing that he might be worshiped and his family would surely be compensated after his death. On the other hand, people need not to be compensated because they did not necessarily sacrifice themselves for the country but were killed only incidentally. From the standpoint of this thought, all the nation but soldiers must equally endure their sufferings, and must not expect reward.

This shows the Japanese meaning of compensation. The compensation must be made for the maintenance of the state, not as remedy for damage to individuals.

## (2) Japanese or foreigners

Japan has been most reluctant to compensate foreigners or foreign countries for their war time damages, even through individual redress or postwar reparations. As for reparations, the San Francisco Peace Treaty provides that Japan must begin her reparations talk with the countries, which the Japanese Army invaded, one by one. This was very advantageous for the Japanese government, seeing Asian countries' economic situation was of great difficulty requiring raising funds for their economic development. Thanks to that situation, Japan could conclude favorable reparations treaties and economic assistant treaties with South East Asian countries. Through these treaties Japan is said to have paid ca. 2.5 billion dollars<sup>(22)</sup>.

After these treaties, Japan declared that the right to make claims had been finally resolved and thereafter any claim from the nationals of these countries could not be accepted. Based on this principle the Japanese government has



been rejecting all claims from foreign countries. These claims included Korean 'comfort women's claims for state compensation, Korean and Chinese laborers' claim for compensation for their deportation and the forced labor during the war.

The nationality clause of the Military Pension Law excludes foreigners from the right to claim a military pension. Ex-soldiers or civilian ex-employees of the Japanese army, who obtained Korean or Taiwanese nationality after the conclusion of the San Francisco Peace Treaty, may not claim their military pension even though they were killed or injured in battle as Japanese soldiers.

Even in the Atomic Bomb Survivor's Aid Law the nationality clause excludes the foreigners from getting relief. The Aid Law provides that in order to get medical relief one should have A-bomb Sufferers' Health Notebook and in order to obtain a Notebook one should apply for it to the governor of the prefecture where one lives. Therefore, foreigners who do not live in any prefecture of Japan cannot apply for the Notebook, which means that one cannot get any assistance from the Japanese government.

It is not easy to explain this tendency of discriminative treatment against foreign victims. In a sense, favorable treatment for Japanese victims is natural for the Japanese officials to adopt. However, Taiwanese and Korean ex-soldiers who demanded their military pension had been once Japanese and had worked under the flag of the Rising Sun, foreign A-bomb sufferers who demanded the A-bomb Sufferer's Health Notebook had lived and worked in Hiroshima and Nagasaki when the A-bombs were dropped there. The reason of these discrimination can only be explained in that Japanese officials were reluctant to take into account the relief of war victims outside their jurisdiction, and politicians and people did not think about the war victims

in such a deep manner that they considered foreign victims as seriously as Japanese victims.

### (3) War responsibility or war crimes

One of the peculiarities of the discussion about Japanese war guilt problems is that the Japanese people always bring into question the war policy of the Japanese government and the Japanese army, and not the problems of war crimes of Japanese soldiers during their occupation of foreign lands. What is most important in their discussion is why and how the Japanese government and army dared to initiate the reckless war against such a gigantic state as the United States without any prospect of victory. The cruel crimes done by Japanese soldiers during the war were indeed sad things, but they seem to have been considered as inevitable result of the war.

Why and how Japan waged the war is no simple question, and a variety of answers can be given. A war is not waged by a country. Responsibilities for a war may be put on each of the belligerent countries regardless of which side wins or loses. Therefore, if the war guilt problem is one which discusses whether Japan must only accept the responsibility for starting the Pacific War, the answer may be very ambiguous and sounds like Japan is shuffling out of her own responsibilities. This is what the Japanese are doing.

It might be said that the Japanese stress war responsibility rather than war crimes from self defense mechanism. The planning, beginning, waging of war can be done by politicians, diplomats, and generals, while war crimes are usually committed by soldiers. It was these soldiers that bayoneted defenseless Chinese prisoners of war, slaughtered and raped hundreds (or tens) of thousands of innocent people including women and children in Nanjing, satisfied their sexual desire with 'comfort women', and so on. In

other words, the Japanese people have been evading their own responsibility for having committed criminal acts on the battlefield, by only talking about the cause and process of the miserable war and deploring the corruption of their political and military leaders.

It is hard to summarize the war experiences of the Japanese. It depends on their social position, age, sex, family, living area, and so on. However, it can be said that most Japanese think that they were victims of their government and army. Being always hungry, weeping their dead fathers, brothers, sons and relatives, they had to run about frantically trying to find a way of escape from the firebombings. They did not actually see the real situation on the battlefields, nor would their soldiers talk about it to the people. The governing circle did not change after the war, politicians and officials were much the same as before the war, only the army disappeared. For them the most evil of all were army generals, and above all Tojo, who was tried and sentenced to death in the Tokyo Trial. Nothing changed except that the army disappeared. The symbol of this lack of change was of course that Emperor Hirohito continued to be the Emperor as he had been.

In this situation it might be natural for the Japanese people that they laid the war responsibility only upon the ruling class and especially army generals. Crimes against peace were the worst crimes which only politicians and generals could, and ordinary Japanese people could not commit. The Tokyo Trial did not admit that the Japanese war criminals committed crimes against humanity. Seeing the Nuremberg Trial, in which most Nazis major war criminals were sentenced guilty of crimes against humanity, it must be noted that the judges in Tokyo thought too little of the significance of crimes against humanity, the reason of which is still unclear.

In short, war guilt problems in Japan were the war responsibility problems which stressed the war itself, and not necessarily the criminal deeds of the Japanese soldiers. This must come from a social background, under which so many people would not admit the scale of the Massacre of Nanjing and the need for compensation of former 'comfort women'. With Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution, Japan is constitutionally one of the most peaceful countries in the world. The Japanese now have a great spirit of hating war, hating nuclear weapons, hating any violence to solve conflicts. However, they also have a cool indifference to the foreign victims of the war at the same time. The Japanese society is where these two psychological phenomena coexist.

### References

- (1) A pioneering work on war guilt problems by Saburo Ienaga gave the following four reasons why war guilt problems should be discussed forty years after the end of the Pacific War; 1) the existence of the victims, 2) the failure of the investigation of war guilt problems, 3) to prevent future wars, 4) the lack of scholarly works on war guilt problems. The existing victims whom Ienaga presents as examples are sufferers of the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, deported Korean immigrants in Sakhalin, war-displaced Japanese in China, and victims of American air attacks. Ienaga seems to understand that Japan carried out a tragic war which produced many sad things for the Japanese people. Cf.; Saburo Ienaga, *Senso sekinin (War guilt)*, Iwanami Shoten, 1985, pp.1-17.
- (2) The Proclamation Defining Terms for Japanese Surrender, in: Sumiya/Akazawa, *et. al.* (eds.), *Tokyo saiban handbook (Tokyo Trial Handbook)*, Aoki Shoten, 1989, p.246.
- (3) The Charter of the International Tribunal for the Far East, in: Sumiya/Akazawa, *et. al.* (eds.), *Tokyo saiban handbook*, pp.251-255.
- (4) Charges and Sentences of the Tokyo Trial, in: Sumiya/Akazawa, *et. al.* (eds.), *Tokyo saiban Handbook*, pp.214-217.
- (5) In his affidavit Tojo insisted that first the Pacific War was a self-defense war which did not break international laws, and secondly he had never thought that he committed war crimes during the whole period of his duties. For Tojo the crimes against peace were the main point to be rejected, while the ordinary war crimes and crimes against humanity were

beyond the question of legal examination. Sota Takizawa (ed.), *Seigi wo tsuranuita Tojo Hideki Tokyo saiban kyojutsusho (The Affidavit in the Tokyo Trial of Hideki Tojo as was carried through to justice)*, Kougen Daigaku, 1998, pp.139, 172.

- (6) 'A' class war criminals means those who committed the 'A' clause (crimes against peace) of the article five (jurisdiction) of the IMTFE.
- (7) Yasuaki Ohnuma, *Sensou sekinin ron josetsu (An Introduction to War Responsibility Problems)*, Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1976.
- (8) Ichiro Kiyose, *Hiroku Tokyo Saiban (Confidential Tokyo Trial)*, pp.50-54.
- (9) Cf.; Masajiro Takikawa (barrister to Shigetaro Shimada, the Minister of the Navy), *Tokyo saiban wo sabaku (Judging the Tokyo Trial)*, Sotakusha, 1978; Kazuo Sato (ed.), *Sekai ga sabaku Tokyo saiban (Tokyo Trial as Judged by Intellectuals)*, Jupiter Shuppan, 1996. It must be noted that there is a Japanese barrister who did not agree with the above critics and approved the jurisdiction of the Tokyo Trial over crimes against peace and crimes against humanity; Cf., Tatsuoki Shimanouchi (barrister to Hiroshi Oshima, the Ambassador to Germany), *Tokyo saiban (Tokyo Trial)*, pp.285-296.
- (10) The Society had about 3500 members in 1997. It is interesting that among the 200 public supporters to the Society about 70 are from financial circles. Cf.; Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform (ed.), *Atarashii Nihon no rekishi ga hajimaru (New Japanese History begins)*, Gentosha, 1997, pp.337-340.
- (11) Kanji Nishio, *Chinmoku suru rekishi (Silent History)*, Tokuma Shoten, 1998, p.21.
- (12) Nobukatsu Fujioka, *'Jigyaku shikan' no byouri (An Analysis of Masochistic Historical Views in Japan)*, Bungei Shunju, 1997, pp.1-4.
- (13) Nobukatsu Fujioka, *Ojoku no kingendaishi (Disgraceful Modern History)*, Tokuma Shoten, 1996, pp.13-30.
- (14) About the problems concerning 'comfort women', see Yoshiaki Yoshimi, *Juhgun ianfu (Wartime Comfort Women)*, Iwanami Shoten, 1995; Aiko Utsumi/Ryo Koshida, et. al. (eds.), *Handbook sengo hosho (Handbook Postwar Reparations)*, Nashinokisha, 1994; VAW-NET Japan (ed.), *Nihon gun doreisei wo sabaku. Josei kokusai senpan houtei no kiroku (Trying the Japanese Army's Slavery System. Documents on the Women's International War Criminal Tribunal)*, 6 Vols., Ryokufu Shuppan, 2000.
- (15) Tomiichi Murayama was the leader of the Japan Socialist Party, which formed the coalition government with the old powerful party, the Liberal Democratic Party, at that time. Under such a political situation, the Asian Women's Fund was constructed through the cooperation of conservative, liberal, and socialist politicians and scholars, such as Mutsuko Miki, former prime minister Takeo Miki's wife, Jinnosuke Ashida, the President of the Japanese Labor Union, Haruki Wada, a famous left-wing historian, Ryozou Sunobe, former Under Secretary of the Foreign Ministry, and so on.
- (16) For some reflective accounts from a collaborator with the Fund, see Yasuaki Ohnuma, *Tokyo saiban, sensou sekinin, sengo sekinin (Tokyo Trial, War Guilt, Postwar Responsibility)*, Toughindo, 2007.

- <sup>(17)</sup> Yutaka Yoshida, *Nihon jin no sensou kan (The Japanese View of War)*, Iwanami Shoten, 1995, p.82.
- <sup>(18)</sup> For the Nanjing Massacre, see Katsuichi Honda, *Nankin he no michi (The Road to Nanjing)*, Asahi Shinbunsha, 1987; Tomio Hora, *Ketteiban Nankin daigyakusatsu (Definitive Edition. The Nanjing Massacre)*, Gendashi Shuppankai, 1982; Akira Suzuki, *Nankin daigyakusatsu no maboroshi (The Illusion of the Nanjing Massacre)*, Bungei Shunjuh, 1973.
- <sup>(19)</sup> For the problems of Yasukuni Shrine, see Tetsuya Takahashi, *Yasukuni mondai (Yasukuni Problems)*, Chikuma Shobo, 2005; Fuyuko Kamisaka, *Sensou wo shiranai hito no tamen o Yasukuni mondai (Yasukuni Problems for Those Without Experience of the War)*, Bungei Shunjuh, 2006.
- <sup>(20)</sup> There are many books on firebombings in Japan, which are usually edited by societies of documenting firebombings of Japanese cities. The definitive edition of those books is; Nihon no kuushuu henshuu iinkai (The Editorial Committee of Firebombings in Japan) (ed.), *Nihon no kuushuu (Firebombings in Japan)*, 10 vols., Sanseido, 1980-1981.
- <sup>(21)</sup> Naoko Ito/Chieko Tabe/Shigenori Nakagawa, *Hibakusha ha naze genbaku ninntei wo motomeruno ka (Why A-bomb sufferers demand being recognized as A-bomb illness victims)*, Iwanami Shoten, 2006, pp.26-36.
- <sup>(22)</sup> Cf., Utumi / Koshida, et. al. (eds.), *Handbook sengo hoshō*, data ㊟.

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